

THE SOCIALIST

Official Organ of the Socialist Educational Society

Vol. 1, No. 4

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10 Cents

Circus Maximus

LA-A-ADIES and Gentlemen! introducing, the most stupendous, thrilling, death-defying exhibition of its kind the world has ever witnessed! The greatest aggregation of all-star performers ever assembled under one top, showing in all five rings! Give your undivided attention and you shall see accomplished before your very eyes the amazing feat of the vanishing armaments of nations. Dissolved into thin air, they will re-appear in the form of magnificent fleets of aeroplanes, skimming serenely in the azure blue; each fitted neatly for earning its way when times are calm and profits unruffled, or, like the chameleon, instantly changed, when the going is rough, into a flashing, buzzing spitter of fire, steel and gas, capable of licking the toughest man-o'-war afloat or ashore!

Your attention is called to this little fellow with the riding boots and the tummy. Step right up, John, bring your little lion with you, so the ladies and gentlemen can see you. John has been having a little trouble over in India, and in Irak and in South Africa, but he never allows little things like that to crab his act.

Over in this ring you see Sam, the tall, slim lad with the chin-whiskers and the striped trousers. He has all the other boys and girls calling him "Uncle." Sam has one great fault, strong drink. He took the pledge about ten years ago, but he's been wabbling. He's a little bashful about that black eye that he got down in Nicaragua, but you ought to see him in a free-for-all!

Et voici! We have with us Mademoiselle, the little lady in white, who carries the bouquet of fleur-de-lis. You will remember with what exquisite savoir-faire she dealt, for the furtherance of peaceful law and order, with those bad boys of 1871 who had the temerity to set up the Commune of Paris. You will recall with what sweet mercy she gave the coup de grace, a la bourgeoisie, to the property menace; how she presented burial to many of those enfants terribles before death, that they might enjoy it the more; and how the casualties mounted to 111,000, men, women and children.¹ One of the world's elite at causing armaments to vanish.

And here we have Matsu, the athletic little chap in the kimono, who loves to ride in submarine boats. He never reads Karl Marx; doesn't allow the book in the house!

Allow me to present Signor, the young man in the black shirt, with the hatchet in his belt. No, he is not going to a funeral; and, Matsu, I warn you, don't try any jiu-jitsu on Signor. Why, just recently, down in Libya, the Signor had a set-to with some desert rebels and he got so mad he flew right up into the air and dropped bombs on 300 camels that were trying to get away, and you would have to walk more than a mile to find those camels!² So, beware!

The management requests me to call to your attention these testimonials from the press, concerning the performance. First, from L'Avenir, of Paris, which speaks for the French steel trust, and therefore dislikes the real motives behind the armament conference.

"The task ahead of us is much more arduous than that at The Hague, because the motives are disguised under pacifist formulas and are designed to promote imperialist manoeuvres. . . The very name naval disarmament conference is a lie. It is not a question of disarming, but of arresting the naval expenditure race. If it is true that Italy intends proposing the suppression of all war navies it will not be on account of Italy's concern for peace, but because of Italy's poverty, since the suppression or even the reduction of war navies chiefly favors the weakest nation, which today is Italy."³

L'Avenir ". . . then dismisses the word parity in connection with the present negotiations as 'ridiculous,' but admittedly impressive to the 'incompetent and ignorant public.' "⁴

Which tends to confirm our suspicions that the whole barrage of peace talk, the international visits, etc., can be shortly spelled thus: P-R-O-F-I-T-S. The capitalist owners of the earth are kicking about high taxes eating into their profits. A cut must be made somewhere, but the might to hold foreign markets, grab new ones and beat all rivals in trade, must not be impaired. Our performers aren't actually going to abolish armaments; not really. Just suppose another horrid war should break out, what would they ever do without weapons!

Representative Burton L. French, United States, chairman of the appropriations subcommittee handling naval expenditures, tells us about the high cost of armament.

". . . the Washington conference. . . has made it possible for this country to save annually \$250,000,000." With all this saving however, "The budget of the United States was greater by three times than the budget of the German Empire the year before the World War broke out."⁴ Further, "He declared that, on the basis of replacements alone, the next fifteen years would see this nation spend more than \$2,000,000,000 on its navy if something did not come from the London naval arms conference."⁴ From The Nation Jan. 29, we learn that the world's expenditure on armament for the year 1928 was \$4,300,000,000. President Hoover in his message to Congress, Dec. 4, 1929, said that, "The estimates for direct appropriations for the War and Navy Departments for 1931 provide a total of \$719,089,000 for national defense." This is coming close to a billion dollars for one year. No wonder the capitalists are growling about the expense, especially when it is pointed out to them that much more efficient

weapons are at hand at far smaller cost.

So it is to be observed that nowadays, "Big Planes Show Military Trend. . . being easily adaptable for troop carriers or armored bombers."¹ The fashions of warfare are changing. Since the advent of aeroplanes and poison gases, much of the old trappings of war are obsolete.

Says General Jan Christian Smuts, of Boer War and World War fame, "The fact is, great wars are no longer fought between armies and navies of opposing countries as they used to be. That began to be clear before the end of the World War . . . No, the attack of the future would be against the civil population and the weapons would be poison gas and bacteria."

Of course, the powers that be may not yet be fully convinced but it is significant that no capital ships are being built anywhere, and that the ones now in existence will all be obsolete by 1936. There is a distinct move towards scrapping the old style of warships in favor of faster cruisers, plane carriers, huge submarines, etc. But it wouldn't be capitalism if there weren't the usual hypocritical ceremony and cock-a-doodle about the matter. Indeed, "Viscount Cecil . . . contributed a short but pointed article to the "Listener" of November 13th, wherein . . . he candidly admitted that the League Disarmament Commission passed a resolution last spring saying, in effect, that it was impracticable to limit the material of armies, their guns, rifles, tanks, etc. 'If that decision remains,' he said, 'disarmament becomes little better than a farce.'" Which needs no further comment.

There will not be disarmament, but the capitalists aren't going to spend their cash on the kind of armament that is of no use. Said Mr. French " . . . naval critics, 'whose judgement cannot be blown down with wind,' declared that, in the event of war, 'battleships would be anchored in the safest harbors pending eventualities.'" Just imagine wasting a \$40,000,000 battleship that way!

But what of the "incompetent and ignorant public" that L'Avenir pokes fun at, meaning, of course, the working class. Is there any worry in London about their lives and limbs lost in war? Pish, tush! who cares if a few millions of wage-slaves are sloughed off in a tussle. "From 1910 to 1920 more men were killed and maimed in our industries than in all the wars in which we have participated from the days of Washington to those of Pershing."

But there's another angle for the working people to look at. Mr. French calls attention to it, saying, "I remember that from another State a delegation of forty of the biggest business men there came before our committee. Their names are nation-wide. They urged that we should do nothing that would reduce the pay. They said, 'Those men are buying homes. They have their families and they are paying for homes on the installment plan. My God, gentlemen,' they said, 'if you reduce this and throw 4,000 of them out of employment, think what it will mean.'" Of course, these big men and true weren't thinking of their own profits, but only of the poor workers who would lose their jobs as a result of armament reduction.

That is the situation the workers are in, however. Elimination of the waste of armament, as with elimination of all waste, means fewer jobs. From the workers point of view, "waste" is good, for it keeps them in wages. The

expense of armament "waste" falls on the boss, not on the worker. To be sure waste is crazy, but isn't the social system of disorder we live in also crazy? Only in a reorganization of society such as the Socialist advocates will we be able to abolish waste with hurt to none and benefit to all. Until the workers decide on the Socialist change, armaments will mean wars in which they will die and be mangled; disarmament will mean fewer jobs, less wages, more poverty and starvation.

Now, watch closely, ladies and gentlemen! The hand is quicker than the eye! "It will be foggy both inside and outside of St. James's Palace," and " . . . the real work will be left for the secrecy of committee rooms."¹⁰ Ah, me! 'twas ever thus with lovers. The five bands will now play the five national anthems all together, and the show goes on.

A. Chesseff.

- 1 See The Socialist, March issue.
- 2 The New York Telegram, Jan. 20.
- 3 The New York Times, Jan. 21.
- 4 Idem.
- 5 The New York Times, Jan. 19.
- 6 The New York Herald Tribune, Jan. 1.
- 7 Socialist Standard, Jan. 1930.
- 8 The New York Telegram, Jan. 7.
- 9 The New York Times, Jan. 21.
- 10 The New York Times, Jan. 19.

From the Press

Poverty is a major cause of crime, though it is not the only one. We reprint the following interesting letter from The New York Times, of Jan. 19, 1930.

To the Editor of the New York Times:

As an official of a crime insurance company, I confirm United States District Attorney Charles H. Tuttle's recent statement that low wages of mass labor are a basic crime cause.

While wages of skilled, organized labor are high, wages of unskilled unorganized labor are too near starvation. This latter fact has been recognized increasingly by crime insurance officials during the last twelve years.

According to the United States census, 25,000,000 clerks, book-keepers, factory hands, mechanics and day laborers average \$25 a week. This is a subsistence wage for a single man; but precludes marriage.

The reason that four-fifths of present-day American crimes are committed by youths between 18 and 25 years of age—as The Times recently stated—is that the wages paid to unskilled, unorganized young workers do not permit a sufficiently attractive normal life. Low wages create poverty, desperation and the slums—and poverty, desperation and the slums, either in the same generation or the next, create crime.

District Attorney Tuttle's suggestion that the United States has developed economically to a point at which labor should be paid a "cultural" wage rather than a "subsistence" wage is an excellent though mild phrasing of the more humane and far-sighted view.

So long as we Americans have exploitation we shall have crime. So long as we continue to wring dollars out of starved and suffering human bodies we shall continue to have hold-ups, theft, burglary, embezzlement and forgery.

New York, Jan. 14, 1930.

Ranulph Kingsley.

Those agreeing with the position of the Socialist Educational Society and desiring enrollment should apply either in person on Tuesday and Friday evening or by letter, to Room 9, 132 East 23 Street, New York, N. Y.

A Problem in Historical Materialism by Karl Kautsky

THE materialist conception of history has been often understood as if certain technical conditions of itself meant a certain method of production, nay, even certain social and political forms. As that, however, is not exact since we find the same tools in various states of society, consequently the materialist conception of history is false and the social relations are not determined by the technical conditions. The objection is right, but it does not hit the materialist conception of history, but its caricature, by a confusion of technical conditions and method of production.

It has been said for instance, the plough forms the foundation of the peasant economy. But manifold are the social circumstances in which this appears!

Certainly! But let us look a little more closely. What brings about the deviations of the various forms of society which arise on the peasant foundations?

Let us take for example a peasantry, which lives on the banks of a great tropical or sub-tropical river, which periodically floods its banks, bringing either decay or fruitfulness for the soil. Water dams, etc., will be required to keep the water back here and to guide it there. The single village is not able to carry out such works by itself. A number of them must co-operate, and supply laborers, common officials must be appointed, with a commission to set the labor going for making and maintaining the works. The bigger the undertaking, the more villages must take a part, the greater the number of the forced laborers, the greater the special knowledge required to conduct such works, so much the greater the power, and knowledge of the leading officials compared with the rest of the population. Thus there grows on the foundation of a peasant economy a priest or official class as in the river plains of the Nile, the Euphrates or the Whang-Ho.

We find another species of development where a flourishing peasant economy has settled in fruitful, accessible lands in the neighborhood of robbers, nomadic tribes. The necessity of guarding themselves against these nomads forces the peasants to form a force of guards, which can be done in various manners. Either a part of the peasants applies itself to the trade of arms, and separates itself from the others who yield them services in return, or the robber neighbors are induced by payment of a tribute to keep the peace and to protect their new proteges from other robbers, or finally the robbers conquer the land and remain as lords over the peasantry, on whom they lay a tribute for which, however they provide a protective force. The result is always the same: the rise of a new feudal nobility which rules and exploits the peasants.

Occasionally the first and second methods of development unite, then we have beside a priest and official class a warrior caste.

Again quite differently does the peasantry develop on a sea with good harbors, which favor sea voyages and bring them closer to other coasts with well to do populations. By the side of agriculture, fishery arises, fishery which soon passes over into sea-piracy and sea commerce. At a particularly suitable spot for a harbor is gathered to-

gether plunder and merchants' goods and there is formed a town of rich merchants. Here the peasant has a market for his goods, there arise for him money receipts, but also the expenditure of money, money obligations, debts. Soon he is the debtor of the town money proprietor.

Sea piracy and sea commerce as well as sea wars bring, however, a plentiful supply of slaves into the country. The town money owners instead of exploiting their peasant debtors any farther, go to work to drive them from their possessions, to unite these into great plantations and to introduce slave work for peasant, without any change being required in the tools and instruments of agriculture.

Finally we see a fourth type of peasant development in inaccessible mountain regions. The soil is there poor and difficult to cultivate. By the side of the agriculture, the breeding of stock retains the preponderance; nevertheless both are not sufficient to sustain a great increase of population. At the foot of the mountains fruitful, well tilled lands tempt them. The mountain peasants will make the attempt to conquer these and exploit them, or where they meet with resistance to hire out their superfluous population as paid soldiers. Their experience in war, in combination with the poverty and inaccessibility of their land serves to guard it against foreign invaders, to whom in any case their poverty offers no great temptation. There the old peasant democracy still maintains when all around all the peasantry have long become dependant on Feudal Lords, Priests, Merchants and usurers. Occasionally a primitive democracy of that kind itself tyrannizes and exploits a neighboring country which they have conquered, in marked contradiction to their own highly valued liberty. Thus the old cantons of the fatherland of William Tell exercised through their Bailiffs in Tessin in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a rule, whose crushing weight could compare with that of the mythical Gessler.

It will be seen that very different methods of production are compatible with the peasant economy. How are these differences to be explained? The opponents of the materialist conception of history trace them back to force, or again to the difference of the ideas which take form at various periods in the various peoples.

Now it is certain that in the erection of all these methods of production force played a great part, and Marx called it the midwife of every new Society. But whence comes this role of force, how does it come that one section of the people conquers with it, and the other not, and that the force produces this and not other results? To all these questions the force theory has no answer to give. And equally by the theory of ideas does it remain a mystery where the ideas come from which lead to freedom in the mountain country, to priest rule in the river valley land, to money and slave economy on the shores of the sea and in hilly undulating countries to feudal serfdom.

We have seen that these differences in the development of the same peasant system rest on differences in the natural and social surroundings in which this system is placed. According to the nature of the land, according to the description of the neighbors will (Continued on page 8)

The Last War and the Next

YOU together with thousands of other workers, may have been reading "All Quiet on the Western Front" and the other realistic war novels recently issued. It is well that the workers, especially of the post-war generation, should know the unimaginable slaughter, torture, misery, hunger, disease and filth of what was at the time known as the "War for Democracy."

At the same time beware of falling into the pacifist delusion—simply recoiling from the horror of war without understanding it, treating war as a problem in itself, and allowing anti-war ideas to dominate your thoughts and activities.

Don't be fooled either, by the booby tale that kings and diplomats ought to fight the wars themselves. Kings today are powerless figureheads, and diplomats have always been the paid and servile servants of the wealthy possessing classes. The war was not caused by big men, but by big business.

The most valuable thing you can learn about the war will not be found in war novels, however grim and bloody they may be. It is, that the war was the mechanical and unavoidable product of the present capitalist system of industry and commerce—just as certainly as that the whirr of an alarm clock is the inevitable result of the clock's mechanism.

It was brought about through the conflicting interests of the capitalist classes of the principal warring nations. Those of Germany and Austria aimed at a unified capitalist empire from the North Sea to the Persian Gulf. Britain feared the expansion of Germany in the East and her growing commercial rivalry. France sought the mineral resources of Alsace-Lorraine. Russia hungered for Constantinople—a commercial outlet on the Mediterranean. America entered the war against Germany largely because American financiers had loaned enormous sums to the Allies.

For proof of the capitalist nature of the war read Boudin's "Socialism and War," and "The Secret Treaties," by F. S. Cocks; and for a brief treatment of the economic basis of foreign politics in general see "Economic Imperialism" by L. S. Woolf.

The same forces that produced the last war are still in operation and are preparing the crisis for the next. This is well illustrated by the following, from a recent editorial:

"The quest throughout the world for raw materials continues. Coal, iron, rubber, coffee still arouse bitter controversies. But markets for investments and for manufactured articles are becoming a far more important bone of contention. Germany is afraid that, after the recent stock-market collapse, American manufacturers may begin 'dumping' in an effort to find markets and employment for idle capital. Lord Melchett, England's most brilliant industrialist, supports Lord Beaverbrook's scheme for free trade within the Empire and protection against the rest of the world—meaning the United States. Europe talks of economic union and Briand proposes his 'United States of Europe' because the new Colossus of the West threatens to swamp all the rest of the world with its surplus food and excess factory products. If, as a result of reduced buying at home, we accumulate a surplus of manufactured articles, they must, in the nature of things, be exported. We shall see our highpowered salesmen sent out in search of new fields abroad to conquer. They will compete with Germany whose reparations payments depend on a favorable trade

balance, and with England whose life's secret is foreign commerce. They will seek additional markets in China, Australia, Russia. The result must inevitably be heightened international tension." (The Nation, New York, Dec. 4, 1929.).

The capitalist class (as distinct from the militarists who live by the threat of war) would certainly avoid war, just as they would industrial depressions,—if they could. But neither leagues of nations nor peace pacts can prevent wars if the economic problems of any section of the master class evolve to the point at which war becomes their only solution, as they have repeatedly done in the past and will probably do in the future. The move to limit armaments is not a proposition to prevent war at all but to minimise that which is always hateful to all property owners—taxation. Even to the dumbest dumbbell it should be obvious that the only talk is of limiting battleships that are enormously costly and at the same time practically a back number so far as modern scientific warfare is concerned. We hear no proposal from any government to set a limit to fighting aircraft, while it is evident that restrictions upon the accumulation of secret chemical formulae for poison gases ready for instant use, is an impossibility.

Remember further, fellow workers, that the NEXT WAR will be more deadly and terrible than the last. Read and learn of the plans for the immediate use of poison gases of delightful efficiency.*

From the editorial section of The World, New York, Dec. 22, 1929, the following tid-bits were culled:

"Poisonous gases were never released from aircraft during the last war. Henceforth flying fleets will manoeuvre behind the lines, over cities, industrial centres or any habitat that may be accused of aiding the enemy."

"Thirty asphyxiating gases were known at the beginning of the war; today there are more than 1,000. In vaults and secret archives of all large nations repose the structural formulae and chemical equations of still other toxins whose potency can only be surmised. . . . the possibilities of wholesale slaughter are unimaginable. . . . the topic hardly enjoys a brisk international commerce: it is something to be guarded. A nation's fate may hang on the balancing of a mere chemical equation."

"Every nation knows that chemistry can decide controversies, protocols and pacts notwithstanding. The present race for armaments is essentially a race for chemicalization."

In the next war you'll not get the chance to be cannon fodder, as you'll be merely so many millions of enemy vermin to be wiped out by the exterminator.

War will cease only when its cause—capitalism—is ended. Therefore, fellow workers, line up with the Socialist Educational Society and help spread the light of Socialist knowledge, which alone will enable our class to overthrow this system and thus end all warfare, both between classes and nations.

R. W. H.

*Read pamphlet No. 248, "Chemical Warfare," 5 cents a copy from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 405 W. 117 St., New York, N. Y.

A Debate

The Socialist Labor Party and the Socialist Educational Society will debate the question: Resolved, That Industrial Unionism is necessary for the Socialist Revolution. The S. E. S. will take the negative side. Place: S. L. P. headquarters, 32 Boylston St., Boston, Mass. Time: Sunday, March 2, 1930, 8 p. m.

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Class or Color

At a public forum in Community Church, in New York, the colored congressman from Illinois addressed a large audience, white and colored, on problems confronting the colored people. In the discussion that followed, all speakers seemed primarily concerned with the question of social and economic equality between colored and white. The Negroes' problems, it was maintained, would be solved if no discrimination were shown against them in restaurants, pullman cars, hotels and in securing employment.

The perpetuation of racial prejudice between the black and white worker, is due to their political and economic ignorance. The white workers, unhampered by color discrimination, are still confronted by the colored man's most serious daily problems—poverty, unemployment, economic insecurity, etc.

As soon as the colored workers become aware that they are living in a society composed of two hostile classes, the capitalist class and the working class, they will be on the way to the only solution of their problems. So far as the workers, white or colored, are concerned, there is no race problem—there is a class problem. All the inconveniences suffered by the workers, white and colored, arise from the present mode of wealth production, which is based upon the private ownership of the means of living. The abolition of capitalism and the establishment of common ownership of the means of wealth production, will solve the problems confronting the working class, regardless of race, creed or color. Let us re-word a saying of one of the Negro spokesmen, DuBois, who wrote, "So long as black laborers are slaves, white laborers cannot be free," so that it reads more accurately, thus: so long as laborers are wage slaves, neither black nor white laborers can be free.

Remember Clemenceau

"It was during Clemenceau's premiership that the Seventeenth Regiment mutinied when ordered to fire on the wine growers of the South, goaded to revolt by his treatment of their demands, and his term of office was marked by some of the most violent strikes ever known in France. It was proved—and Clemenceau could not deny it—that he had paid an agent provocateur called Metivier to incite the workmen to violence to give him an excuse for shooting them down." (Robert Dell, the well-known Foreign Correspondent, in The Nation. Jan. 2, 1930.)

Life vs Property

HENDERSON, KY., Jan. 13.—Burnt offerings to Mammon, two miners today are entombed in a blazing mine here, sacrificed that the flames might not completely destroy their precious tomb.

P. H. Bridewell, thirty eight, and J. H. Woods, thirty-three, were working in a slope mine when gasoline from an engine caught fire and spread to the workings.

Fearing the fire would have been fanned further into the mine, where natural gas fumes would be ignited, a government inspector ordered the shaft mouth closed, although witnesses aver the men could have been rescued had the door been kept open just a few moments longer.

The mine will be kept sealed for fifteen days when it is believed the fire will have died out from lack of oxygen. (New York Evening Journal, Jan. 14, 1930.)

S. E. S. Lectures

The Socialist Educational Society holds free lectures on alternate Saturday evenings, eight o'clock, at our headquarters, Room 9, 132 East 23 Street, New York, N. Y. The subjects of forthcoming lectures will be:

February 15—Disarmament.

March 1—Socialism and Religion.

March 15—Capitalism Today in the Light of the Paris Commune.

The Society also conducts a class every Tuesday evening, eight o'clock. Text of the course, Socialism, Utopian and Scientific. Frederick Engels. Admission free.

Boston Study Class

A Study Class, under the auspices of the Socialist Educational Society, meets every Sunday at 10:30 A. M., at the International Hall, 42 Wenonah Street, Roxbury, Mass. Admission is free.

About The Socialist

Address all communications, subscriptions, and donations to the Publication Fund to the Socialist Educational Society, 132 East 23 Street, New York, N. Y.

We acknowledge receipt to date of \$165 toward the Publication Fund. All those desirous of helping us in publishing The Socialist, are earnestly requested to send in their donations, large or small.

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Correspondence

Ernest Untermann and the S.E.S.

We have received a letter from Ernest Untermann, noted for his translations of Marxian writings and his prominence in the Socialist Party of America. It is too long to print in full, but the following extracts contain the salient points he raises. We number them for convenience in replying.

(1) "Anybody with ordinary sense can soon learn the ABC of scientific Socialism. The differences that have split the movement the world over, and which still keep on sowing disruption, arise almost wholly from the difficulty of applying this ABC to the changing conditions of capitalist economics and politics."

(2) "Things in the United States have moved so that the Socialist party has never had the support of the main army of organized workers, whereas in Europe the organized workers either started or later supported the Socialist party. We haven't the support of the American Federation of Labor today. All attempts to wipe this organization out naturally make enemies for the Socialists. Such attempts to build up rival labor organizations have always failed in this country. Neither attacks nor appeals to reason had any effect on the majority of the members of the A. F. of L. Neither 'boring from within' nor assaulting from the outside have built up any effective Socialist party or Socialist labor union. The main effect of all these attempts has been to split those who made them more than the A. F. of L. . . ."

"I can see no prospect of securing the support of the A. F. of L. for the American Socialist party or any other Socialist organization. Without such support, no Socialist movement can be built up into a powerful enough economic or political body to take the power away from the capitalist class and inaugurate a constructive policy of social change."

(3) "Furthermore, unless you are deliberately working to produce a destructive revolutionary spirit which shall concentrate on upsetting the ruling class without regard to economic consequences of a breakdown for the mass of the people, you must have some practical suggestion to ease matters without a destructive break, so that the great mass shall not suffer while the ruling class is gradually shorn of its power to exploit the masses. In fact, this is the central problem of Socialist education. It is essentially a technical problem which requires great organizing ability. . . ."

(4) "Furthermore, seeing that the Socialist movement in this country can never be an economic and political power without the support of the majority of wage workers and dirt farmers, and seeing that such support has not materialized and shows no signs of materializing within the next 20 years, it must be evident that whatever economic and political power any Socialist organization hopes to exert as a result of its educational work, will have to be exerted in co-operation with some non-Socialist organization or party. There is the point where the 'uncompromising revolutionary Socialist' breaks down and reaches the end of his science. You denounce the leaders of the New York Socialist party for offering a temporary alliance to the Liberals and Progressives, as they call themselves, but what else can they do, assuming that they can get some economic or political position in which they might do something practical, except seek the help of those who inside the old capitalist organizations fight the old reactionaries?"

Our Reply

(2) We will commence with No. 2. Our critic fails to give reasons for his belief that the Socialist movement must be supported by the trade unions. We can see no such necessity.

There is no similarity in principles and objects between the two, although both are manifestations of the class struggle. The purpose of all unions, trade or industrial, is to deal with questions of wages, hours and conditions of labor. The function of the Socialist movement is to organize the working class, consciously and politically for the conquest

of the powers of government, in order that they may be converted from instruments of oppression into the agent of emancipation by the establishment of common ownership and democratic control of the means of production. While Socialists are a small minority of the workers, trade unions as such can be of no value to them for their immediate purpose, Socialist propaganda, the only work they can accomplish during this period. What use the unions may be during the actual revolution, when their members have become Socialists, is purely speculative. Today only a very small percentage of the workers are organized, and it is even possible that trade unions will disappear as machinery reduces an ever greater mass of workers to unskilled machine-tenders, and produces side by side with this a large, permanent army of unemployed.

Untermann points enviously to the alleged Socialist parties of Europe and their marked success in obtaining "the support of the main army of organized workers." We cannot conceive of a Socialist pointing with pride to the achievements of the Labor Party in Great Britain, and the Social Democratic Party in Germany, who demonstrated so clearly their non-Socialist character by their ardent support of their respective capitalist governments during the war. Their chief claim to fame, since then, consists of their ability to administer capitalism in the interests of the master class more efficiently than the avowed capitalist parties. We need only point to the German "Socialist" government's suppression by force of working-class revolts, and Mr. Snowden's marvellous reparations victory as indications of this efficiency. This not in spite of, but rather because of, the support of the "main army of organized [but non-Socialist] workers."

From the last two sentences in this paragraph one can only conclude that Untermann has no hope whatever of Socialism ever being achieved. If it does not mean this, what does it mean?

(3) We are frankly amazed that one who has translated "Capital" can seriously assert that the working class must be taught how to work. This is the gist of this paragraph. We have always been under the impression that the capitalist system was taking care of that. All directive and technical ability necessary for the production of wealth lies in the hands and brains of the working class. In view of this fact we can conceive of no economic breakdown as a consequence of the ruling class being expropriated. On the contrary, the Social Revolution is necessary, and will be a consequence of, the increasing economic dislocation that capitalism itself produces, by being, in the words of Marx, "a fetter upon the productive forces."

The Socialist Revolution will not be a repetition of the French Revolution and other bourgeois revolutions, with their street barricades and blind mob riots. It will be distinguished from all previous revolutions in that it will be the conscious act of the immense majority. This implies a Socialist working class. Such a Socialist working class will not permit an economic breakdown whilst accomplishing its historic mission.

During the change to Socialism there will undoubtedly be problems of organization to solve, but they will have to be dealt with as they arise. Capitalism is constantly

producing new situations, which renders it impossible to foresee developments more than a short time ahead. The movement has a long and difficult task before it. How foolish it would be for us to consume our time and energy making plans for future situations, plans that in any case would be rendered obsolete almost as soon as formulated. We have no time for such utopian intellectual exercises while there is the urgent work of real Socialist education to be done.

Untermann's "central problem of Socialist education," is, therefore, no problem for the movement in its present early stages. The real problem is to spread amongst the workers a knowledge of their class position, of their exploitation and of the way to end it. Our critic informs us that (1) "Anybody with ordinary sense can soon learn the ABC of scientific Socialism." But this ignores the fact that the worker does not get the opportunity to consider without bias the theory of Socialism. He is reared in a social environment that fosters individualism and is surrounded by agencies of capitalist propaganda, press, pulpit, radio, etc. Amongst these agencies we must unfortunately include alleged Socialist organizations, such as the S. P. or A., that for years have misled the workers with social-reform illusions and by their identification of Socialism with so-called "public ownership" and other small-capitalist ideals.

(4) It will be seen that Untermann continues to uphold the policy of the pseudo-socialist parties the world over, with their political trading and tactic of holding out delusive hopes of "something practical" for the workers—thus building up parties, swollen with members possibly, but lacking a soundly educated Socialist membership—the only guarantee against betrayal by "leaders", against a false confidence in their own strength, and against a recurrence of the debacle of 1914.

Alliance with capitalist parties, however "liberal" is, firstly, productive of confusion in the minds of the workers because it is a practical denial of the class-struggle basis of the movement; secondly, it must lead to a submergence of the movement in a purely reformist program—because it has built up membership and voting strength mainly from those elements desiring reforms, but having no real understanding of the workings of the capitalist system and no desire to abolish private property in the means of living.

We hold that no reforms can substantially benefit the workers under capitalism. Look at the miserable condition of the British and German workers, who have been blessed with old age pensions, insurance against sickness and unemployment and other reforms for a generation. What measures may be of some slight benefit we can trust to the capitalists to enact as they become desperate and fearful at the steady growth of an educated and disciplined revolutionary party of the workers.

We are under no illusions as to the difficulty and the probable slow progress of the work ahead of us, but hold that it can not advance faster than the education of the workers in Socialist principles.

Regarding the small farmers; their many problems can not be solved so long as big capital continues to have the strangle hold on their production. Socialists must

analyze the farmers' position and show them that in the long run their interests lie with the workers, in Socialism. But while Socialists are a small minority the farmers will probably be antagonistic because of their strong attachment to private property, and they will probably organize to achieve a palliation of their condition. "Everything depends upon whether they continue to be economically necessary to capitalism. Should new technical advances make small scale farming in one branch after another obsolete and foster a more rapid concentration of farm property the last hope of the small farmer, as such, will be gone. On the other hand, as capitalism matures, its anomalies becoming so glaring that no counter-propaganda can conceal them, and the Socialist movement advances rapidly, strong, disciplined and capable, the farmers may realize the force of the Socialist argument and join the movement.

Untermann makes several references to "the movement" meaning presumably the decadent remnants of the so-called "Second International" which though it numbered its members by millions collapsed in 1914 at the first real call to act in line with Socialist principles, because it had abandoned the platform of the class struggle and lost itself in liberal reformism.

We draw attention to the growing movement to establish a real Socialist International, based upon the recognition of the class struggle in practice as well as theory, represented in this country by the S. E. S. and in England by the Socialist Party of Great Britain who last year celebrated a quarter of a century of real Socialist work. If he wishes to keep an eye on this movement we suggest that he send in his subscriptions for *The Socialist* and the *Socialist Standard*.

The Editorial Committee.



Blessed Are the Poor

THE working man belongs to the propertyless class. He owns nothing but his power to labor, which he offers for sale. It is a commodity placed on the market, as any other piece of merchandise. If he is fortunate, he procures a buyer, otherwise he keeps on hunting until he finds one or starves. (Of course, it may not be so easy to "fade out of the picture" with so many soup kitchens and poorhouses at one's service, and so many funds for America's hundred neediest families.) In exchange for his labor-power he receives a certain amount of money, his wage, which will provide him with food, clothing and shelter. The workman, in a couple of hours or so produces an amount of wealth equal in value to his wage, but that doesn't mean he can go home. His place is in the factory until he has given his pound of flesh and slaved the allotted time. The value produced during this additional time is surplus value. Out of this the boss gets his profit.

After the worker has used up all this time grinding out profits for the boss, he is so full of pep that he is ready for the sprint home. Propelled by the whistle, he arrives at the subway and there waits patiently until the doors of the train fly open. Then there is a wild scramble for seats, and the devil may take the hindmost. It's all in the game. We workers love to herd together. The masters

prefer the comforts and isolation of a Pierce Arrow.

In winter the transit companies furnish heat by a money saving device. Animal heat is generated by the workers getting together in close contact.

Finally our worker arrives home, in one of the most exclusive slums. His wife meets him, and she doesn't look like Gloria Swanson, either. A proletarian's wife doesn't retain her youth and beauty very long. While they eat they indulge in a very spiritual conversation on what bargains the wife obtained in the market, and how tender the meat is. As tender as the face of the boss when you ask him for a raise. After supper she puts on her best dress from the bargain basement. He puts on his good suit, on which he may still be paying installments even after it is worn out. They go to the tired working man's club, the talking pictures. After a hilarious evening watching the world's anointed making merry in the pictures, they go home. And so to bed to be ready for the next day's grind.

But this monotonous life is broken by exciting little occurrences like panics, getting fired, lockouts and strikes.

Panics are caused by overproduction. Whenever there is a superabundance the workers suffer most. The industries are shut down and no work is to be had until the abundance is used up, or rotted away as in the case of foodstuffs. What can anyone think of a system where the workers suffer with the good things of life going to waste?

With the introduction of more and more machinery there is a growing displacement of workers and the army of the unemployed grows in number. Work is more intensified and the worker on the job has to keep pace with the machine at a breakneck speed, with the result that he is thrown on the human junk heap at a comparatively early age and a younger man substituted. Women and children also replace the men. No special reform can do away with this situation; it is too much a part of the capitalist system and can only disappear when capitalism passes away.

However important the strike may be as a weapon in the struggle over wages, conditions and hours, it is limited by the workers' lack of economic resources. The employers, on the other hand, have plenty of economic power and use it. While their profits may suffer somewhat during a strike, it is often a matter of life and death to the workers. Under present conditions the workers must utilize the strike. If they do not fight against intolerable conditions, we cannot expect them to organize to overthrow the present system.

While the capitalist class has accumulated immense wealth, the working class has accumulated more poverty and insecurity. The cleavage between the classes has grown wider, and no patching up of the system can reconcile them. In the development of capitalist society, the ruling class was forced to give the franchise to the working class. So far the workers have not been awake to their class interest and have used the ballot to keep themselves in subjection by voting the masters and their politicians into power. We can see in the recent strikes down South the state and its machinery arrayed against the workers. This will continue so long as the workers support their masters' spokesmen and the wages system. B. G.

Declaration of Principles of The Socialist Educational Society

The Socialist Educational Society holds:

That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i. e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labor alone wealth is produced.

That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex.

That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interests of the working class are diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

THE SOCIALIST EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY therefore, declares its purpose of carrying on Socialist educational work to the end that this political party be formed, determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labor or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the working class to organize under its banner in order that a speedy termination be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labor, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.


A Problem in Historical Materialism

(Continued from page 3) the peasant system of economy be the foundation for very different social forms. These social forms become then side by side with the natural factors, further foundations, which give a peculiar form to the development based on them. Thus the Germans found when they burst in on the Roman Empire during the migration of the peoples, the Imperial Government with its bureaucracy, the municipal system, the Christian Church as social conditions, and these, as well as they could, they incorporated into their system.

All these geographical and historical conditions have to be studied, if the particular method of production in a land at a particular time is to be understood. The knowledge of the technical conditions alone does not suffice.

It will be seen that the materialist conception of history is not such a simple formula as its critics usually conceive it to be. (Ethics and the Materialist Conception of History, pages 164-170.)

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The fourth installment of Science: A Weapon for the Workers, will appear in the March issue.  357